



SENATE FISH AND GAME
EXHIBIT NO. 6
DATE 1-31-13
BILL NO. SB 143

SB 143 -- Montana Senate, Fish & Game Committee, Thursday, January 31st, 3:00 pm in the Old Supreme Court Chambers.

Good afternoon members of the Senate Fish & Game Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to present public comment.

My name is Claudia Narcisco, I'm from Missoula, and I'm testifying as a volunteer on behalf of the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club and our 2000 members in Montana.

The Sierra Club supports regulated, fair chase hunting and fishing. Many of our members hunt and fish in Montana. However, the Sierra Club does have policies opposing trapping.

I am here today to urge the committee to Vote No on Senate Bill 143.

This bill is draconian and represents a "Shoot on Sight" approach to wildlife management. It gives anti-bison landowners full authority to kill any wild bison that happens to wander across their property. And, it requires the immediate slaughter, removal and/or sale of all native bison that enter the state of Montana from Yellowstone National Park on public and private land. It would set up a year-round, unlimited license, hunting season.

SB 143 overrides the professional judgment Montanans pay for in the salaries and services of responsible employees and agencies. Yet, its fiscal note estimates it will cost \$110,000 to \$190,000 annually in additional personnel and operating expenses. The state also stands to lose \$400,000 a year from USDA/APHIS since SB 143 strikes language specific to spread of disease from bison to persons or livestock, nullifying an agreement with that agency. The price tag of SB 143 could reach half a million annually. For this added expense we would be getting a bloody stain from the way we manage our iconic wildlife.

SB 143 could replay bison slaughters of the past and reverse conservation efforts. Ecologists tell us urgent measures are needed to conserve the bison genome. As the last continuously wild herd of plains bison on earth, Yellowstone Park bison are the most important bison conservation herd in the world. Current management practices of slaughtering bison and controlling population size has already contributed to the loss of important genetic diversity. SB 143 will be a further detriment to the bison genome and over time rekindle discussions to list wild plains bison under the Endangered Species Act.

We believe Montanans recognize that bison should be managed not as pests or vermin, but as valued native wildlife. Wild bison are an asset to our state, not a liability.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose SB 143. Thank you.

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